

**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
CITY OF RALEIGH  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY FOR PARK PLANNING**

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to describe the roles and responsibilities of Raleigh citizens and the Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department in working in concert to plan, design, and develop greenways and recreation facilities. It describes the situations in which the advice, aspirations and concerns of citizens are reflected in planning and development decisions, and specifies circumstances in which the Parks and Recreation Department does not seek public input. It describes a set of principles and minimum provisions for public notification and comment that govern public participation processes organized by the Parks and Recreation Department. This policy document is shall be accompanied by the *Raleigh Parks and Recreation Public Participation Operating Guidelines* wherein best practices, operating procedures, and roles and responsibilities for specific process formats and procedures are described.

## **2. Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department, in carrying out its mission:

- (a) To invite and organize opportunities for direct public involvement in carrying out its responsibilities for planning, design, development, major renovation, and any proposed projects that would, in the judgment of the Parks Director, substantially modify the property's use or appearance.
- (b) To adhere to the core principles of public participation as described in this policy.
- (c) To provide sufficient organizational resources and capacity in the form of skilled and knowledgeable staff of professional planners, project managers, consultants, and others to every public participation event and process organized by the department.
- (d) To manage public participation processes effectively by following best practices as defined and described in the Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department Public Participation Operational Guidelines.
- (e) To provide early and thorough notification of proposals and projects through a variety of means to users, user groups, neighborhoods, neighborhood groups, and other interested people.
- (f) To complete public participation processes by notifying involved and interested people and groups of final decisions, the impact of their input on those decisions, and the reasons for them.

- (g) To commit to learning and improving public participation processes by engaging in self-assessment and design correction.
- (h) To consider potentially exempt from this policy proposals or projects undertaken for legal or safety reasons, proposals for which the public process is spelled out elsewhere by ordinance or by policy, or events protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The Department recognizes that public outreach and input may substantially increase the effectiveness of a project.

### 3. Public Participation Principles

The Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department will adhere to the following core principles when engaging citizens in public participation processes:

#### *Principles in Process Design*

- (a) **Strive for Inclusiveness of Participation.** All public participation events and processes should include credible representatives of the full spectrum of parties who are interested in or will be affected by a decision.
- (b) **Design Processes Collaboratively.** Public participation processes should, to the greatest extent feasible, be designed collaboratively by the Department and those participating in them. This means that potential participants should be identified and brought into the planning process as early as possible, and that ongoing processes should be adapted as needed to effectively engage the capabilities and needs of all participants.
- (c) **Make Processes Transparent.** Participants engaged in a public involvement process should have a clear idea of the purpose of the process and who is responsible for organizing it, how the process will unfold, how decisions will be made and by whom, their role in the decision process, and how their ideas and concerns will be integrated into the final decision.
- (d) **Time Processes in Relation to Decisions.** Public participation processes should be planned so that they can be informed by emerging analysis and so that their outputs are timely with regard to the decision process.

#### *Principles in Process Management*

- (e) **Promote Full Participation.** The process should be managed to give all involved a fair voice so as to benefit from differences in perspectives, approaches, backgrounds, and culture.
- (f) **Promote Mutual Understanding.** Citizens should come away from public participation processes with a greater understanding and appreciation of the perspective of other citizens and the Department. Participants should have the opportunity to accept one another's needs and goals and legitimate. This

requires time and a process that allows people to freely exchange information about what is important to them.

- (g) **Strive for Inclusive Solutions.** Participation processes should be designed to avoid either/or decisions and advance opportunities to build win/win solutions. The key to building integrative outcomes is to provide the means for people to make their interests known and understood.
- (h) **Share Responsibility for Decisions.** Citizens should share in the responsibility for decisions by being able to weigh in on choices that are important to them. Responsibility goes both ways. Sharing decision responsibility obligates citizens to find solutions to shared problems rather than simply fighting against alternatives they dislike.

#### ***Principles in Information Integration***

- (i) **Ensure Transparency of Information and Analysis.** Information and analyses should be accessible and understandable to all participants. Be explicit about assumptions and uncertainties.
- (j) **Anticipate Information Needs.** Citizens should have opportunities to define the information they need, when they need it, and what they will do with it. Anticipate and help organize information provision and dissemination.
- (k) **Pay Attention to Both Facts and Values.** Provide information and deliberation processes to allow citizens to evaluate trade-offs among things they value.

#### **4. Activities Covered under this Policy**

- (a) Park and Recreation Site Master Planning, Plan Revision, and Plan Amendment
- (b) Park and Recreation Facility Design and Development (15-30% construction drawing review)
- (c) System Integration Planning
- (d) Park and Recreation Facility major renovation and redevelopment
- (e) Ad Hoc Studies such as Feasibility (of a specific project or action), Costs/Revenue, or a particular singular issue charge from City Council;
- (f) Strategic Planning (city-wide topic such as aquatics, cemetery, dog parks, invasive species mgmt, etc);
- (g) Comprehensive Park System Planning

#### **5. People Affected by the Policy**

- (a) Park Neighbors

- (b) Park Users (existing and potential)
- (c) User Organizations
- (d) Neighborhood Groups and Homeowner Associations
- (e) Citizen Advisory Councils
- (f) Parks, Recreation and Greenways Advisory Board
- (g) Raleigh Department of Parks and Recreation
- (h) Other City of Raleigh Departments

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### *A. Responsibilities of Parks and Recreation Staff and Consultants*

- 1) **Process Design and Planning** – Identifies the appropriate public participation format and designs a context-appropriate process, selects committee members (when appropriate)  
**Primary:** Parks and Recreation Director  
**Secondary:** Design Development Administrator, Sr. Planner, Planner II
- 2) **Process Approval** – responsible for approving the process as designed  
**Primary:** City Manager  
**Secondary:** Parks and Recreation Director, Design Development Administrator
- 3) **Process Management** – Responsible for managing the entirety of the public participation process including consultant management and process logistics  
**Primary:** Design Development Administrator  
**Secondary:** Sr. Planner, Planner II
- 4) **Communication Management** – Manages communications with citizens and stakeholders including responding to citizen inquiries and comments  
**Primary:** Consultant, Sr. Planner, or Planner II depending on scope of project  
**Secondary:** Sr. Planner, Planner II, or Planner I depending on scope of project
- 5) **Process Promotion and Notification** – Responsible for notifying stakeholders and promoting participation opportunities  
**Primary:** Consultant, Sr. Planner  
**Secondary:** Planner II, Planner I

- 6) **Department Spokesperson** – Represents the Department at public involvement processes

**Primary:** Sr. Planner or Planner II, depending on project

**Secondary:** Design Development Admin, Parks Director, superintendent(s) if clarification is called for

- 7) **Technical Expertise** – Provides technical information to citizens during public involvement processes

**Primary:** Sr. Planner or Planner II, depending on project

**Secondary:** Park Superintendent(s), individual program directors (Arts, Athletics, Nature, Urban Forestry, Special Pops, etc.) as needed

- 8) **Process Facilitation and Meeting Management** – Manages citizen/stakeholder interaction at meetings

**Primary:** Consultant, or various City staff, depending on project

**Secondary:** Sr. Planner or Planner II, depending on project

- 9) **Process Recording & Summarizing** – Records citizen / stakeholder ideas, comments, questions, recommendations etc., summarizes them in meeting minutes, and disseminates them to citizens / stakeholders.

**Primary:** Consultant

**Secondary:** Sr. Planner or Planner II

#### ***B. Responsibilities of the Parks, Recreation and Greenways Advisory Board***

- 1) **Process Review** – Reviews and advises on proposed public participation process designs

- 2) **Outcome Review** – Reviews outcomes of public participation processes including Master Plans, Plan Revisions, or Plan Amendments and makes recommendations to City Council.

- 3) **Capital Improvement Program** – Reviews City Administration CIP recommendations and provides comment.

#### ***C. Responsibilities of City Manager and City Council***

- 1) **Process Approval** – Responsible for approving the process as designed

- 2) **Adoption of Final Plans** – Final approval of the products resulting from public participation processes including Master Plans, Plan Revisions, or Plan Amendments. The Council may choose to return disputed plans to the PRGAB for additional revision of key elements.

## 7. Notification and Public Comment

### **A. Notification**

All opportunities for direct public involvement in planning, design, development, renovation, and other proposed projects identified in Section 4 will be accompanied by public notification in formats, media and timeframes that promote public participation to the maximum extent possible. .

### **B. Public Comment**

All opportunities for public participation organized by the Parks and Recreation Department for planning, design, development, renovation and other proposed projects identified in Section 4 must include opportunities for open public comment at a public forum where citizens may attend in person. At a minimum, public comment will occur:

- 1) At the initiation of the project or action;
- 2) Prior to adoption by the PRGAB of the final plan or document;
- 3) Prior to adoption by the City Council of the final plan or document.

## 8. Activities Exempt From This Policy

The following actions or activities undertaken by the Parks and Recreation Department are exempt from this policy:

- 1) Proposals or projects undertaken for legal or safety reasons;
- 2) Any proposal or action for which the public participation process is defined and described elsewhere by ordinance or by policy;
- 3) Any events protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

## 9. Relationship to other City departments and ordinances

[to be added]

## 10. Glossary of Terms

- A. **Master Plan:** a Program Statement, supported by a statement of Vision for an individual park site and depicted by a conceptual Graphic Plan.
- B. **Master Plan Revision:** if City Council determines a Master Plan is no longer current, effective, or supported by the community as a whole a new Master Plan effort may be instituted.

- C. **Master Plan Amendment:** an addition to a Master Plan that complements, contributes to and does not detract from the Vision and Program.
- D. **System Integration Planning:** an interim plan for undeveloped park sites that addresses Comprehensive Plan correlation, documents City Council's acquisition and intent, begins a process of complete site inventory for natural and cultural features, and recommends interim management actions.
- E. **Major Renovation and Redevelopment:** action that, in the judgment of the Parks Director, substantially alters the program, function, or use by the public of a facility or site.